Allotment Assessment
Blackrock Pocket

I. Name and Number of Allotment

Blackrock Pocket Allotment #01102
Permittee: Simplot Livestock Co.

II. Livestock Use

1. Preference: 1,890 AUMs
2. Historic Use Range: 930 to 2,165 AUMs
3. Suspended Preference: 0 AUMs
4. Season of Use: 07/01 to 11/30
   (TNR authorizations included grazing use through February 28)
5. Kind and Class of Livestock: Cattle
6. Percent Public Land: 100%

III. Allotment Profile

1. The Blackrock Pocket Allotment is located in the southwest part of the Jarbidge Field Office Area. All of the allotment is located in Multiple Use Area (MUA) 16. The allotment is not split into pastures. The current permit was issued on March 1, 1997 authorizing Simplot Livestock Co. 1,890 AUMs. This permit is valid until February 28, 2007. Since 1990, temporary nonrenewable (TNR) grazing use was authorized in 1991 and 1995. The allotment actual use is included in Table 1. There are 2,442 acres (about 20%) of public land in the allotment within the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivre Bighorn Habitat Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).
2. Federal Acreage: 12,142
3. Jarbidge Resource Management Plan Objectives (1987) (Pages II-59 to 62):
   - Increase AUMs of forage issued for livestock from 8,052 AUMs to 10,996 AUMs by the year; Blackrock Pocket is 12% of MUA-16; proposed 20-year use for the Blackrock Pocket was 2325 AUMs. This increase use would result from the availability of additional forage from water developments, brush control and seeding projects and improvement in native range condition (II-3). Improve 48,031acres of land in poor (early seral) ecological condition
   - Manage big game habitat to support 1,780 mule deer in the winter and 820 mule deer the rest of the year, 151 antelope, and 100 bighorns. Existing populations are 1,475 mule deer in winter, 500 mule deer rest of year; 140 antelope and 2 bighorns. Protect all crucial big game winter habitat.
   - Protect the scenic and recreational values of 15 miles of the Bruneau River through special management designation and management.
   - Improve 1,350 acres of bighorn habitat.
   - Maintain current condition of riparian habitat.
4. Approximately 3,655 acres of the Bruneau/Jarbidge ACEC is present in the allotment. All acreage in the ACEC is to be improved to a good ecological condition (RMP II-67).
5. Key Forage Species:
   - Bluebunch wheatgrass

6. Livestock Grazing Management: This allotment is authorized to be grazed in the late summer and fall. The current permittee grazes cattle in the allotment mostly in the fall (September to November).

IV. Management Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the allotment's status in meeting the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management and to renew the grazing permit with management guidelines to meet these Standards.

A. Summary of Studies Data

1. Actual Use

Table 1 shows the actual use since from 1990 to 2002.

Table 1. Actual Use

Grazing Season	AUMs
1990	1,608
1991	2,146
1992	1,056
1993	1,310
1994	1,766
1995	2,165
1996	1,783
1997	1,723
1998	1,515
1999	1,774
2000	930
2001	1,736
2002	1,884

2. Climate.

Long term water year precipitation (September through June) for the Three Creek NOAA Weather Station is 11.45 inches and for the BLM Murphy Airfield rain gauge it is 13.6 inches. Table 2 shows the precipitation average for the water year at the BLM Murphy Airfield rain gauge which is representative of this allotment. Also shown is the yield index for the Three Creek Weather Station. The Yield Index is a precipitation-yield relation which provides reliable and effective information for use in comparing annual production yields to what is expected in a normal year. The Yield Index is used in forecasting and adjusting range forage estimates.

Table 2 - Water Year Precipitation and Yield Index

Year	Murphy Airfield	Yield Index At Three Creek
1993	18.8*	NA
1994	13.5	.72
1995	15.8*	2.02
1996	14.6*	.74
1997	18.3*	1.45
1998	24.7*	1.62
1999	13.3	1.27
2000	9.9	.82
2001	10.9	.96
2002	10.6	.99

*Above Average Precipitation.

3. Utilization:

Table 3 shows the actual data from sampling crested wheatgrass at transects in the Allotment after grazing in 2002.

Table 3. Utilization Data

Year	Key Species	Utilization Range	Average Utilization
2002	Bluebunch wheatgrass	20 to 40 %	30%
	Intermediate wheatgrass	73 %	73%

4. Production

No production data is available for the allotment.

5. Condition and Trend

There have been no long-term trend study sites established in the allotment, therefore vegetative and soil cover trends are unknown. As for the vegetative conditions in the allotment, the most recent rangeland surveys were conducted in 1982-83. According to these surveys, approximately 35% of the allotment was delineated as burned, 10% was in poor condition, 10% was in fair condition, 25% was in fair/good condition and the remaining 20% was a seeding in satisfactory condition. Although a more recent vegetation survey has not been conducted in the allotment since then, it is presumed and best estimated that these conditions are still probably applicable today due to the relatively low moisture regime.

The major range site of most of the allotment (about 75%) is an Artrw/Agsp, Loamy 10-13" type at elevations between 5,500-6,000 feet, and about 25% consisting of a Artrw/Posa3, Loamy 7-10" type at lower elevations between 5,200-5,500 feet which drop off toward the Bruneau River along the western edge of the allotment.

Table 4a – Condition and Trend Evaluation of Native Vegetation Study Sites

1981-83 Inventory Site	Inventory Site Location	Vegetation Type	1981-83 Ecological Rating*
LH-59	15S07E16	Agsp/Sihy	PNC
LH-54	15S07E17	Sihy/Posa3	Early
LH-53	15S07E23	Artrw/Agsp	Late
LH-70	15S07E29	Artrw/Posa3/Sihy	Mid
LH-71	15S07E32	Ararn/SihyPosa3	No Rating
RA-108	16S07E04	Agsp/Posa3	Late

Table 4b – Condition and Trend Evaluation of Seeding Study Sites

1981-83 Inventory Site	Inventory Site Location	Vegetation Type	1981-83 Condition Rating*
LH-69	15S07E29	Agin2/Sihy	Excellent

***** Jarbidge RMP referred to Range Condition as: Excellent, Good, Fair and Poor. Since that time these terms have been related to; Potential Natural Community, Late Seral, Mid Seral and Early Seral, respectively. Value terms of excellent, good, fair, poor are only used as a value rating for areas rehabilitated with *Agropyron cristatum* and *Agropyron intermedium.*

B. Rangeland Health Assessment

In 2002, rangeland health data was gathered on the Allotment at 4 ecological sites within native range. Rangeland health data was collected per Technical Reference 1734-6, *Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health*. The rangeland health data is collected by an interdisciplinary team for the purposes of making a quantitative assessment of the soil/site stability, hydrologic function, and the integrity of the biotic community for the various ecological sites.

Four transects were read at various ecological sites and are identified as BR-1 to BR-4. The "Preponderance of Evidence" based on the 4 transects, is shown in Table 5. The degree of departure or deviation from the potential ecological site description (None to Slight, Slight to Moderate, Moderate, Moderate to Extreme, or Extreme) is made based on an evaluation of the data.

Table 5. Preponderance of Evidence

Attribute (The sites are considered meeting attributes if not mentioned)		Deviation From Potential				
		Extreme	Moderate to Extreme	Moderate	Slight to Moderate	None to Slight
Soil Site Stability Rationale: BR-1 is a reference area for a Loamy 10 to 13 inch ecological site. Some long flow patterns (BR-3, 4). Pedestals up to 3 inches in height indicating some soil loss (BR-3). Bareground slightly higher than expected because of fire (BR-2). Bareground moderately high than expected for the site (BR-3, 4). Wind scouring and deposits evident, but they occurred after the fire (BR-3, 4). Some weak soil surface resistance to moisture as pedon dissolved with agitation in water (BR-3). Surface soil pedons dissolve immediately in water (BR-4). There is 1-2 inches of soil loss as shown by burnt big sagebrush stump sticking above the ground (BR-4)	Native				BR-3, BR-4	BR-1, BR-2
	Seedings					
Biotic Integrity Rationale: There is a moderate to extreme low composition of perennial forbs, annual forbs and perennial native grasses PNG (BR-4). Legumes (nitrogen fixers) are not apparent in plant communities (BR-4). Big sagebrush plants show heavy use resulting in few seed stalks. (BR-2, 3, 4). Annual production 0 to 25% of potential (BR-4). Halogeton prominent in the plant community (BR-4). Big sagebrush has low vigor (BR-2). Rabbitbrush replaced big sagebrush after wildfire (BR-3). Invasive plants sparse and or locally abundant in small disturbed areas (BR-3).	Native			BR-4	BR-3	BR-1, BR-2
	Seedings					
Hydrologic Function Rationale: Refer to Soil Stability section.	Native				BR-3, BR-4	BR-1, BR-2

1. Standard 1 – Watershed

The sites at BR1 and BR2 meet all the indicators for this Standard.

The sites at BR3 and BR4 both have a large amount of bare ground (greater the 30% cover). These areas show some wind scouring and deposits that likely occurred immediately after the area burned. Soil surface resistance to erosion is a moderate to extreme departure from potential as shown by the rapid dissolving of a soil surface pedon in water. There is a low quantity of biological crust to hold the soil surface together. Soil surface loss likely occurred following the fire that burned through the area.

The site BR4 shows a moderate departure for plant community composition and distribution relative to infiltration and runoff. The large bare ground areas and the limited perennial native vegetation allows water to flow off site in the large interspaces. This situation results in a moderate departure from plant community composition and distribution relative to infiltration and runoff. There is 1 to 2 inches of soil loss as noted by burned off stumps shown above the current soil surface. This soil loss is a result of the sheet erosion evident by long flow patterns

2. Standard 2 - Riparian Zones and Wetlands and Standard 3 - Stream Channel/Floodplain

There are no perennial or intermittent riparian areas in the Blackrock Pocket Allotment. The rim on the East side of the Bruneau River is the western boundary of the Allotment. Cattle have no access to the river. Cougar Creek is present in the eastern side of the allotment and is at least a wetland. It has Baltic rush and runs some water during the spring in most years.

3. Standard 4 - Native Plant Communities.

Four sampling sites were located in two range sites (loamy 7-10 and loamy 10-13). BR1 location is a reference site for the Loamy 10 -13 ecological site.

BR-4 was in the loamy 7-10 range site. This site had burned sometime in the early 1980's. Shrub cover presently is 8 percent canopy cover with 3 percent provided by sagebrush. Other shrubs providing canopy cover are green and gray rabbitbrush. Perennial native grass cover is 18 percent, provided primarily by Sandberg bluegrass (17 percent). Bottlebrush squirreltail is the other native grass species providing cover. Thurber needlegrass is the late seral species that should be dominant on this range site. Native perennial or annual forbs did not provide any cover, but some species are present in low amounts (hoary aster, penstemon, and hawksbeard). Biological soil crusts were limited to 3 percent cover. Bare ground was 33 percent. Annual exotic plants provide 14 percent cover along the cover transects. The primary exotic annuals on the transects were cheatgrass and halogeton. Russian thistle and bur buttercup are also present, but did not provide any cover on the transects. BR-4 is not meeting most indicators for this Standard. This area is Blackrock Pocket proper. It appears to have been burned at the same time as the area at BR-3. There is a significant amount of halogeton in the plant community and very little sagebrush cover. The production of the area is low because of the lack of sagebrush and the limited amount of late seral bunchgrasses such as Thurber needlegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass and bottlebrush squirreltail. The presence of Sandberg bluegrass provides some competition against invasive cheatgrass which is present in small scattered plant communities (about 5 percent cover). Bluebunch wheatgrass and bottlebrush squirreltail are present at less than 1 percent cover.

BR-1, BR-2, and BR-3 all were in the loamy 10-13 range site. As noted earlier BR-1 represents a reference area for a loamy 10-13 range site. Total shrub canopy cover is 13.3 percent, of that 12 percent canopy cover is big sagebrush, with the remainder rabbitbrush. Average sagebrush height is 19.5 inches. Total grass cover is 54.3 percent in 3 species as follows: bluebunch wheatgrass 32 percent, Sandberg bluegrass 21 percent, and bottlebrush squirreltail 1.3 percent. The average grass height is 9.8 inches. Native perennial forbs provide 8 percent cover and annual native forbs provide 1.3 percent cover. Native forbs are diverse with paintbrush, milkvetch, phlox, daisy, aster, and hawksbeard present. Bare ground is at 6 percent and biological soil crusts are 35.7 percent. Exotic species are present in trace amounts (<1 percent cover).

BR-2 has less sagebrush cover (5 percent) and more rabbitbrush cover (6 percent) than other sites. Average sagebrush height is 22.8 inches. Perennial grass cover totals 38 percent, with bluebunch wheatgrass providing 21 percent cover and Sandberg bluegrass at 17 percent cover. Average grass height is 8.1 inches. Perennial native forb cover is 9 percent and annual native forb cover was 1 percent. Biological soil crusts provide 23 percent cover, whereas bare ground is 11 percent. The BR-2 location meets all indicators for this Standard except "Reproductive

Capability of Perennial Plants". The primary concern is the hedging that is occurring on sagebrush. The grasses and forbs present are very capable of producing seed.

BR-3 location is in an area that burned sometime in the late 1970's or early 1980's. Sagebrush canopy cover is 2 percent and rabbitbrush cover is 5 percent. The average sagebrush height is 21.5 inches. Sandberg bluegrass is the most abundant grass (11 percent cover) followed by bluebunch wheatgrass (9 percent) with 1 percent cover for bottlebrush squirreltail and intermediate wheatgrass. Average grass height is 5.9 inches. Perennial native forb cover is 5 percent, primarily *Phlox*, and the annual native forb cover remains at 1 percent. Although biological soil crusts are present, none provided ground cover on the cover transect. Bare ground is 31 percent. The amount of cover provided by exotic annuals is 6 percent, mainly bur buttercup with some cheatgrass. Halogeton and Russian thistle are present. Soil loss historically occurred immediately after the fire. It is not occurring now. For "Functional Structural Groups" the concern is the lack of the sagebrush overstory which resulted from the fire. Bur buttercup is the invasive plant with a five percent cover.

Crucial mule deer winter range is located in the southern portion of the allotment. General mule deer winter range is located along the western side of the allotment. Antelope are present in the allotment year round. There are no data on number of deer, elk, or antelope utilizing the habitat in the Blackrock Pocket Allotment. There are no data regarding the mule deer or antelope populations specific to this allotment. Antelope herd data for hunting unit 46 is generally down. The native habitat is used as fawning habitat and winter cover for antelope and mule deer. Some of the elk summering in Nevada are believed to winter in this allotment, to some extent.

4. Standard 5 - Seedings

There are no crested wheatgrass seedings in the allotment. There is one intermediate and fourwing saltbush seeding in the Blackrock Pocket area. It is relatively small and was not assessed.

5. Standard 7 -Water Quality

The only permanent surface water associated with this allotment is the Bruneau River, which basically forms a seven mile boundary along the northwestern perimeter of the allotment. Historically, cattle may have had access to this water source along this stretch for the majority their drinking needs in the allotment or in the general area; however this is no longer applicable. Since cattle have been denied access to the river for quite sometime now, the demand for water is now met with the development of an upland watering system of pipelines and troughs. The implementation of this watering system has fully lured away all of the direct impacts of cattle use at the river source, which in return should have helped to improve the water quality of the river.

As for the water quality of the Bruneau River, the BLM has not done any monitoring of this river mainly because the regulatory State agency, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), has not identified nor nominated the Bruneau River, from the state line to Hot Creek, on the State's 1996 or '98 303(d) lists. Currently however, DEQ is in the review and planning stages of the Bruneau River Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan (draft 2002), which may include the review of the beneficial uses of the Bruneau River, along with several other creeks and water bodies in the basin. When the plan becomes final, recommendations for best management practices will be applied to this river (in cooperation with the BLM and private land owners) that will improve and enhance any "water quality limited" issues or concerns.

Other probable surface waters within the allotment include a few natural playas and a short (two mile) segment of Cougar Creek in the central eastern area of the allotment. Although the playas are ephemeral in nature, they do on occasions impound and retain water for livestock use during high rain fall events or after snow melt in the spring. The BLM does not monitor these waters nor does the DEQ have any concerns with them either mainly because of their nature. No water is ever release by these playas. It either sinks or evaporates, if not first used by livestock or wildlife. As for Cougar Creek, much of its flows originate from Dead Horse Spring on private land about three miles up course of the Black Rock Pocket allotment. Due to this distance and the relatively low flows of this spring, rarely does any water reach the allotment before it evaporates or sinks. For the most part, Cougar Creek is predominately intermittent in nature for most of its course and because of this, the BLM has not done any monitoring and according to the "draft" Bruneau River Basin TMDL, DEQ has suggested this creek be delisted for lack of flows and biota.

As previously mentioned, much of the water use for livestock and wildlife comes from a pipeline and troughs water distribution system that runs through the central area in the allotment. The source for this main pipeline system comes from springs on public land in Nevada. The quality of this water was not monitored by the BLM, but is presumed to be of good quality for livestock and wildlife consumption since it comes directly from a protected and enclosed source.

6. Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals)

A number of species presently designated as Sensitive species are present in the allotment. For the most part, the allotment has not been inventoried for sensitive species. Sensitive species occurrences are frequently from incidental observations. Also, a number of wildlife species presently designated as "watch" are also present. Watch species are **not** presently designated as Sensitive species, but may be added to the sensitive list in future years. There are no plant species presently classified as sensitive known to be in the allotment. Only limited surveys for sensitive plants have been conducted in this allotment and sensitive species may occur. It is unknown whether the standard is being met for special status plant species. All sensitive and monitor species are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 - Idaho BLM Sensitive and Watch species in the 71 Desert Allotment

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Presence
Greater sage grouse	*Centrocercus urophasianus*	S	C
Mountain quail	*Oreortyx pictus*	S	H
Prairie falcon	*Falco mexicanus*	S	C
Loggerhead shrike	*Lanius ludovicianus*	S	C
Brewer's sparrow	*Spizella breweri*	S	C
Sage sparrow	*Amphispiza belli*	S	C
California bighorn sheep	*Ovis Canadensis californiana*	S	C
Spotted bat	*Euderma maculatum*	S	C
Townsend big-eared bat	*Corynorhinus townsendii*	S	L
Bull trout	*Salvelinus confluentus*	T	L
Swainson's hawk	*Buteo swainsoni*	W	C
Sage thrasher	*Oreoscoptes montanus*	W	C
Brewer's blackbird	*Euphagus cyanocephalus*	W	C
Western burrowing owl	*Speotyto cunciularia*	W	L
Status codes: T= listed Threatened, S = designated Sensitive species; W = Watch category Presence codes: C = presence confirmed in allotment; L = presence likely in the allotment			

Greater Sage grouse. A single sage grouse lek (2O-119) has been documented in the Blackrock Pocket Allotment. Three other sage grouse leks are in the adjacent allotments (Table 7.) This lek had 26 males when found in 1971. Sage grouse droppings were located at two of the native sites sampled. Several sage grouse were flushed from a wetland by a stock pond along the road to Blackrock Pocket in 2001. With the exception of the Blackrock Pocket (proper) area, there is adequate shrub cover and height for nesting and wintering sage grouse. There is adequate herbaceous height (> 7 inches) and grass cover (>15%) for sage grouse nesting. Vegetation communities consisted of bluebunch wheatgrass with greater than 5% forb cover. However, it should be noted that bluebunch wheatgrass is approximately 33% lower in areas used by livestock compared to the reference area. In areas where bluebunch wheatgrass is the dominant grass, a use level of 35% will likely provide for suitable residual nesting cover for sage grouse more than 0.5 miles from water. In areas dominated by Thurber needlegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, or Sandberg blue grass a use level of 20% will **not** provide adequate nesting cover within 0.5 miles of water.

Table 7 - Numbers of male sage grouse in leks at or near the Blackrock Pocket Allotment for which there is data.

Lek #	# Males	Year of Recent Count	Highest # Males	Year of Count
2O-118	0	2002	30	1971
2O-119	0	1998	26	1971
2O-120	0	2002	30	1971
2O-160	0	2002	24	1998
Lek # in bold is in the allotment				

Mountain quail. This species has been documented in the in the Bruneau River Canyon in the Blackrock Pocket Area. This species may be present in the upland areas. The Nevada Division of Wildlife has been involved in a re-introduction effort in the general area south of the Idaho State line.

Prairie falcon. Prairie falcons have been observed over the Blackrock Pocket Allotment. Suitable nesting habitat is provided by the cliffs along the Bruneau River Canyon and Blackrock Pocket.

Loggerhead shrike. Loggerhead shrikes have been observed in areas with taller sagebrush in the Blackrock Pocket Desert Allotment. The location where this species had been observed burned in a recent wildfire.

Brewer's sparrow and Sage sparrow. Both species are present in the allotment where big sagebrush is present in larger patches. To a limited extent, the amount of nesting habitat for these species has declined due to wild fires,.

California bighorn sheep. Approximately 3,600 acres of the Bruneau/Jarbidg ACEC are in the Blackrock Pocket Allotment. A large portion of the bighorn habitat dominated by early seral species and in some areas cheatgrass in Blackrock Pocket area. Idaho Department of Fish & Game conducts aerial surveys for bighorn sheep. Based upon their data the California bighorn sheep numbers have declined from a high of 169 animal in 1996 down to 48 in 2000. Bighorn numbers have increased in the past 3 years according to recent data. Bighorn sheep numbers are less than 40% of the projected for the RMP. The majority of the observations have been collected following lambing by Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Radio collared bighorn sheep appear to move away from areas where livestock are present. Although most of the California bighorn sheep observations to date have been within the canyon, bighorn use in upland areas has occurred over 1 mile from the canyon rim. Grazing cattle during the winter (December into March) in this area is not compatible with wintering bighorn sheep. Livestock graze during the winter in or adjacent to bighorn winter range in the Blackrock Pocket, Diamond A, Bruneau Canyon, Poison Butte, 71 Desert, Winter Camp, Flat Top and Bruneau Hill Allotments, or essentially all the bighorn sheep winter habitat along the Bruneau/Jarbidge Canyons.

Spotted bat. Spotted bats were confirmed in the Bruneau River Canyon. Spotted bats forage well beyond the canyon rim in the Blackrock Pocket Allotment.

Townsend big-eared bat. This species has been confirmed in the Bruneau River Canyon and likely forages in the uplands of this allotment. No hibernacula are known to be present in the area.

Bull trout. The Jarbidge River population of bull trout was listed as a Threatened species in 1999 by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. There are some historic records of bull trout in the Bruneau River. A portion of the uplands in the Blackrock Pocket Allotment is in the watershed that drains to the Jarbidge River. Livestock in the Blackrock Pocket Allotment do not have access to bull trout habitat.

Slickspot peppergrass. Neither slickspot peppergrass, nor its habitat is known to occur in this allotment.

C. Guidelines for Grazing Management

There is no formal grazing management guidelines implemented for the allotment. This allotment is grazed in the fall only. There is continual rest during the growing season. All troughs do not contain wildlife escape ramps.

Per the *Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management* the following Guidelines need to be implemented to promote significant progress toward the Standards:

> Guideline 6 – The development of springs, seeps, or other projects affecting water and associated resources shall be designed to protect the ecological functions, wildlife habitat, and significant cultural and historical/archaeological/paleontological values associated with the water source.
>
> Guideline 8 – Apply grazing management practices that maintain or promote the interaction of the hydrologic cycle, nutrient cycle, and energy flow that will support the appropriate types and amounts of soil organisms, plants, and animals appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform.
>
> Guideline 9 – Apply grazing management practices to maintain adequate plant vigor for seed production, seed dispersal, and seedling survival of desired species relative to soil type, climate, and landform.
>
> Guideline 12 – Apply grazing management practices and/or facilities that maintain or promote the physical and biological conditions necessary to sustain native plant populations and wildlife habitats in native plant communities. (Not all of the water troughs have functional wildlife escape ramps. A few pastures have 4 strand fences with high top wires which impede the movement of wintering mule deer and pronghorn.)

V. Conclusions

All indicators for the applicable Standards for Rangeland Health are not being met in the allotment for Standard 1 (Watershed), Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities), and Standard 8 (Special Status Species).

VI. Consultation

Jim Klott, Wildlife Biologist
Arnold Pike, Range Conservationist
Sheri Hagwood, Botanist
Max Yingst, Recreation/Wilderness
Jeff Ross, Archeologist
Clare Josaitis, Natural Resource Specialist
John Ash, NRS – Climate/Monitoring/WQ
Cedar Creek Cattle Co.-Chuck Jones

VII. Recommendations

Maintain preference at 1,890 AUMs. Coordinate season of use with the Bruneau Hills, Flat Top, and 71 Desert Allotments to reduce the amount of winter use in bighorn sheep habitat and mule deer winter range.

Manage for light utilization levels (up to 40%). This would maintain and allow improvement of the ecological condition by reducing grazing impacts to watershed features including soils, biological crust, and native plant communities during both above and below normal precipitation years. Areas seeded to fourwing saltbush should have this species included as a key species to ensure it is maintained in the seeding.

Conduct Ecological Site Inventory of those acres previously determined to be in poor condition to quantify current status. Seed or plant native shrubs, grasses and forbs into poor condition range sites and rest as necessary to ensure establishment. Species for planting include: winterfat, four-wing saltbush, Wyoming big sagebrush, bottlebrush squirreltail, bluegrass, palmer penstemon, globemallow, and sainfoin. This would result in improvement of poor condition range and improvement of bighorn sheep and mule deer habitat.

Construct a fence to limit cattle access to the Blackrock Pocket (proper) area. This fence would allow the area to be rested following vegetation treatments.

Ensure that all water troughs have correctly installed and properly functioning wildlife escape ramps and that water is in all troughs from May through October, even when livestock are not present in the allotment.

Remove the trough and large storage tank for the Blackrock Pocket Pipeline (project #6255) installed in the early 1980's. This pipeline is not functional and has a trough located within the 1 mile buffer for the ACEC.

Maintain pipelines so that all water is put into troughs with float valves. Fence over-flow ponds to exclude livestock and provide habitat for wildlife.

No salting within the ACEC to protect Bighorn habitat and cultural resources.

*Note: 50% use on key woody species is not allocated to livestock. Use is expected to be low except for during the winter if snow covers herbaceous vegetation. Crucial winter range was identified in this allotment.